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C. BIRTH CEREMONIES.

As soon as the child is born the father or the Molla repeats the "Bâng" in his ear "Allah Akbar" (which an Astori, of the name of Mirza Khan, said was never again repeated in one's life). Three days after the reading of the "Bâng" or "Nasht" in Gilgit and seven days after that ceremony in Astor, a large company assembles in which the father or grandfather of the newborn gives him a name or the Molla fixes on a name by putting his hand on some word in the Koran, which may serve the purpose or by getting somebody else to fix his hand at random on a passage or word in the Koran. Men and women assemble at that meeting. There appears to be no purdah whatsoever in Dardu land, and the women are remarkably chaste.* The little imitation of purdah amongst the Ranis of Gilgit was a mere fashion imported from elsewhere. Till the child receives a name the woman is declared impure for the seven days previous to the ceremony. In Gilgit 17 days are allowed to elapse till the woman is declared pure. Then the bed and clothes are washed and the woman is restored to the company of her husband and the visits of her friends. Men and women eat together everywhere in Dardu land. In Astor, raw milk alone cannot be drunk together with a woman unless thereby it is intended that she should be a sister by faith and come within the prohibited degrees of relationship. When men drink of the same raw milk they thereby swear each other eternal friendship. In Gilgit this custom does not exist, but it will at once be perceived that much of what has been noted above belongs to Mussulman custom generally. When a son is born great rejoicings take place, and in Gilgit a musket is fired off by the father whilst the "Bâng" is being read.

* This is said to be no longer the case, except in those Dard republics, where foreigners have not yet intervened. In mountainous Yasin, and, above all, in Hunza, sexual laxity has ever been great. Where Hunza rulers have substituted dancing-boys for the dancing of men (formerly both men and women danced together), a worse evil has been introduced. A new sacred relationship is the one created by the foster-mother. The linguistic portion of "The Hunza-Nagyr Handbook," as also of Parts I. and II. of "Dardistan," answer the questions of whether and where polygamy, endogamy, etc., existed among the Dards, who, in appearance and sentiment as regards women, as also in legendary lore, are very "European," but whom [illegible] will convert into strict Muhammadans and haters of the "Feringhi."

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what the Peris say. We communicate it in songs to the people.' If the Deity[1] sees anyone wearing green clothes he gets angry. The reason for this is that the peris wear green clothes, they say, and therefore if any earthly being puts on green clothing the peris become angry and do him injury."

The attitude of the Peris towards ordinary mortals cannot be described as cordial or benevolent. For instance: "They say that if anyone goes to the desert at midday the peris will snatch at his eyes and make him blind."

If a new house proves to be poor or unlucky it may be due to the adverse influence of a Peri[n]. Again: "When a woman, all of whose children have died, gives birth to a child the mother cuts the umbilical cord and licks the blood that comes from it. The reason for this is that over every woman there is a Peri woman. The Peri woman says, 'Now that this woman has drunk the blood of her child she will never do me any good,' and fearing the woman the Peri clears out."

How the reluctance to relinquish power over a human being indicates how such power is prized. Various methods are employed to obtain it even to the point of stealing or carrying off children or adults. In this we have an important resemblance between the Peris and the fairies of the West. The following notes are relevant in this connection: "A *dewijo mai* (i.e. 'outside mother') is a fairy in the jungle who gives milk to a child and rears it. When the boy grows up he is a good mountaineer." In one known case the peri-fostering says he only sees his Peri mother when he is alone.

"Ten or more years ago (i.e. counting from 1922) a boy was carried off by the Peris from *Nápur*. His clothes were found on the hills but he has never returned again."

One of the grooms of the Assistant Political Agent, Chilka, made the following statement: "Every day (i.e. always) at the (end of the) dark period of the moon the peris carry me off. I see them and they see me. They say to me, 'You stay with us and we'll look after you well. If you don't

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weakness he does come to her, she recovers and he in his turn dies. 959

When the Rā.i succeeds in her attack she flies off with the victim to the Rā.is' meeting-place. Rā.is fly mounted on leaves or on spinning-wheels. They are debarred from the use of the broomstick, for that is an implement of Western civilization unknown in Gilgit. The victim is carried along in a sheet. As it is stated that at certain places Rā.is are sometimes *heard* flying through the air, one may conclude that they are not visible when they fly and that they conduct their revels in spiritual, immaterial forms and not in their everyday fleshly bodies. Similarly with the victim, for his bodily presence remains to all appearance safe in his home. What the Rā.i secures is only some spiritualized, but still edible, presentation of him.

A Rā.i in action has to look where she is going and to mind her steps, for if her foot touches water or a graveyard she can proceed no further.

When the victim has been safely conveyed to the place of assembly where all the Rā.is of the district are collected, it simply remains to chop him up and distribute him in fragments to the company. The chopping-up is effected with an adze. Hence, incidentally, the adze has acquired [544] a taste for human flesh and is a dangerous house-mate for a woman at child-birth as it is apt to go and open the door to give admittance to Dā.ūs, Peris, and Rā.is (*cp.* 317).

No time is wasted on cooking or dressing the flesh, for the Rā.i likes her meat raw. Nor does dancing, so far as my information goes, enter into the order of the day. This is curious in view of the procedure at the Sabbats of the Western Witches and the popularity of dancing on festive occasions in Gilgit at the present day.

I have mentioned physical obstacles which may intervene between the Rā.i and the indulgence of her tastes, but she has other more active interference to reckon with.

There are two kinds of human Arri-Rā.i, whose business